



**To:** Interested Parties

**From:** Amy Loudenberg, Kinser for Our WI Kids Campaign Manager

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**Subject:** Jill Underly Put on Notice by Voters Looking for Change

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The primary is firmly behind us; the race to become the next Department of Public Instruction (DPI) Superintendent has emerged as a surprising dark horse in the upcoming April 1 Spring General Election. A race typically relegated to the back burner, the race for DPI superintendent rarely receives the same coverage as other high-profile spring races. In 2025, it's clear that is changing.

With growing concerns about the direction of the state's education system, the future of our children at stake, and a clear absence of leadership from current Superintendent Jill Underly, it's evident that Wisconsin families are seeking change. In April, they have the chance to vote for a true change agent – Brittany Kinser.

### **Jill Underly in Serious Trouble**

There's no easy way to say it: Wisconsin kids are worse off today than they were before Jill Underly became DPI Superintendent – and Wisconsin parents, teachers, and school leaders see it every day. Only 3 out of 10 children are career- or college-ready. Ninety-five percent of Black students in Milwaukee cannot read at grade level.

Governor Tony Evers (who notably didn't endorse Underly) was compelled to step in and audit Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS) because Underly failed to hold them accountable – and found serious issues within the institution. Meanwhile, our children are less safe in schools because MPS refuses to hire school resource officers (SROs).

In addition, Underly has stated publicly that she has ["no regrets"](#) about her handling of MPS's many failures and has aggressively defended her decision to lower standards, essentially covering up how poorly Wisconsin students are performing.

Finally, as pointed out by Jeff Wright and his campaign (who received a not insignificant share of votes), Underly has poor communication and leadership skills. She didn't communicate her closed-door decision to lower standards with Governor Evers, many public school superintendents do not support her, and she has lost the respect of many on her own team at the Department of Public Instruction

It's this defiant and unapologetic response to failures, and the leadership, communication, and honesty gap at DPI, that have left our children behind and parents in the dark. These weaknesses could be their undoing on April 1.

### **Wisconsin Voters Are Rejecting the Status Quo**

In the wake of the November 2024 election that led to Wisconsin voters rejecting the status quo, business as usual will no longer suffice for the average voter. They want a clean slate, fresh ideas, and leadership that is accountable to them.

While Underly's defiant defense of her tenure is one thing, recent history shows Wisconsin voters are more inclined to express their opinions when it comes to the issues.

Wisconsin's school choice programs poll favorably in the state, with a significant percentage of voters in favor of maintaining and/or expanding options for families. Unfortunately for Underly, she finds herself on the wrong side of voter sentiment on this issue.

More importantly, [polling](#) shows that 52 percent of voters opposed Underly's decision to lower standards, with [31 percent](#) of Wisconsinites saying they strongly disagree with the change.

### **The Numbers Speak for Themselves**

If those numbers aren't enough, hard data from polls, fundraising, and the recent primary showcase the opportunity for Brittany Kinser to connect with Wisconsin voters in 2025 amid Underly's declining strength as a leader and candidate in the eyes of the public.

A [recent poll](#) revealed that only 32 percent of Milwaukee residents trusted Underly and her ability to lead, with only 23 percent holding a favorable opinion of the current DPI superintendent. In comparison, the same poll found that Milwaukee Mayor Cavalier Johnson has a 47 percent approval rating.

It's not just approval among voters where Underly falls short – it's fundraising, too. Clearly, Underly is struggling to rally supporters ready to watch schools drop further down the leaderboard if she only raised [\\$132,000](#), a stark contrast to the more than \$500,000 raised by Kinser, who officially registered her campaign in mid-December, 2024.

But nothing rings more alarm bells for Underly than her performance in the February 18th primary, which experienced [record-breaking](#) voter participation, despite frigid temperatures.

While Kinser outperformed the last moderate candidate for DPI, Deb Kerr, by eight percentage points, she also increased vote totals in 49 counties compared to Underly and increased the vote share percentage in 46 counties.

Furthermore, Underly barely received 50 percent in Dane County and only 46 percent in Milwaukee County, two critical areas for Democrats.

Unfortunately for Underly, nothing is more damning than the fact that as a Democratic incumbent supported by both the Democratic Party of Wisconsin and the American Federation of Teachers - WI, and [others](#) supporting her candidacy, 62 percent of Wisconsin voters chose to cast their ballots for someone else.

### **Brittany Kinser is the Right Candidate at the Right Time**

If there was ever a candidate who met the moment, it's Brittany Kinser. A first-time candidate and newcomer to the political arena, Kinser has spent the last 25 years as a champion for children. As a public school special education teacher, award-winning public school principal, and education consultant, she also served as CEO of a Milwaukee education advocacy nonprofit, City Forward Collective. Kinser received the "Beating the Odds" award from then-State Superintendent Tony Evers for her work in Wisconsin. She was a registered [lobbyist for City Forward Collective](#) during the 2023-2024 legislative session. She [advocated](#) for increased funding for ALL schools in a bipartisan bill that was supported by Republicans and Democrats and signed into law by Governor Evers. The organization also lobbied on other legislative proposals and topics.

Last year, Brittany co-founded 95 Wisconsin, an initiative rooted in her steadfast belief that with high-quality, evidence-based instruction, 95% of Wisconsin children can achieve reading proficiency. She wants Wisconsin to be the first state in the nation to turn this potential into reality.

Brittany's dedication to creating transformative educational opportunities is matched by her academic credentials. She holds a master's degree in Educational Leadership from Columbia University Teachers College, a master's degree in Designing Science Curriculum from the Illinois Institute of Technology, and a bachelor's degree in Special Education from Eastern Illinois University.

Contrary to the lies being spread by Underly and her friends at DPW, she has never worked in a private school or been hired to lobby specifically on their behalf. In addition, Kinser has received two endorsements so far

this campaign cycle – CFC Action Fund and Scarlett Johnson, a school choice advocate. For clarification purposes, she has never received the endorsement of Moms for Liberty, which only endorses school board races.

Kinser is driven by her passion for seeing children succeed – being able to read, write, and do math well - so they can attend college, get a meaningful job, or master a trade. It's her commitment to restoring high standards and her calls for more parent engagement and transparency at DPI that have endeared her to voters across political, socioeconomic, and geographic lines.

Brittany's dedication to our Wisconsin kids and what they need to be successful stands in stark contrast to the political games played by Jill Underly and her record of failure at DPI. Kinser's broad message appeals to every Wisconsinite who values quality education for students – and it's what will carry her across the finish line.